

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
Bon Homme School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Needs assessment information (such as personnel, facilities, etc)
- Personnel training
- Surveys
- Information on home school students
- Comprehensive plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee reported the district has established and implemented an on going child find system to locate, identify and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years old who may be in need of special education. The district has an effective pre-referral and referral system in place to ensure students are identified without unnecessary delay.

The steering committee indicated the district has the processes in place to provide the children enrolled in private school placement in accordance with the requirements of IDEA. When a student is placed in a private school or facility, the district does monitor the placement to ensure that special education and related services are provided to eligible students.

The steering committee stated the district has embarked on activities involving reviewing data gleaned from Dakota STEP as well as curriculum mapping to ensure the instruction provided to students, both students participating in general education and special education settings, is appropriate and addresses the content standards.

The steering committee reports the district has policies and procedures in place to ensure that students with disabilities are not subjected to suspension and expulsion rates that are greater than those for students without disabilities.

The steering committee stated the district does implement procedures to determine personnel development needs and does develop a schedule of professional development activities to meet those needs. Professional development activities have occurred on a monthly basis with the use of late starts.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The district implements a variety of strategies to enhance reading in each of the local schools. The district has implemented reading strategies through Reading First and SD READS. During the 90 minute reading block for elementary students, they use many reading strategies including Walk to Read. The district has implemented an after school program for grade K-5 three days a week. The students have a time to complete homework, and activities are used to improve critical thinking skills.

Meets requirements

The district's child find activities are implemented annually through a combination of informing the public through newspaper articles, annual screening programs and on-going referrals with the exception of students at the Bon Homme Hutterite Colony. Please refer to the area of needs improvement.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team determined through file reviews and interviews, child find is not an active process for children at Bon Homme Hutterite Colony. The district and the consultant from the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired were aware of a child in need of special education and related services since the birth of the child on April 20, 1998 and no referral was made. The placement IEP was held April 27, 2005. The consultant from the SDSBVI was involved with the family but no formal process was in place.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child

reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Numbers of children screened
- Preschool age
- School-age
- Age at referral
- Student progress data
- Personnel training
- Personnel development information

Meets requirements

The steering committee indicated the Bon Homme school district does provide FAPE to all eligible children with disabilities and the district meets the requirements for providing FAPE for those eligible students with disabilities who have been removed from school for more than 10 cumulative school days.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Free Appropriate Public Education as meeting requirements.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team determined through interviews and file review, there is some confusion about what eligibility category should be used for students in need of speech language therapy while attending a preschool. The district has been using 550 or 570 as a category for students evaluated in the area of speech and language and receiving only speech language therapy.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Prior notice
- Contact logs
- Evaluation report
- Surveys
- Personnel with designated certification
- Lists of tests currently used in the district (date of publication)

Meets requirements

The steering committee noted the district provides appropriate written notice and obtained informed consent before assessments are administered to a child as part of an evaluation or reevaluation. The district through its evaluation process does ensure the proper identification of students with disabilities. The district ensures re-evaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements and appropriately evaluated for continuing eligibility.

Needs improvement

The steering committee indicated some processes need to be fine tuned, such as those eliciting parent input into the evaluation process and functional assessment needs to be addressed in all situations. In three student files, reevaluations were not completed within the three year requirement. Some difficulty arises with multiple evaluators. A contact system has been implemented, evaluators know specifically what they are to evaluate and the timeframe from which they are to work. A copy of the prior notice/consent is given to each evaluator by the coordinator.

Validation Results**Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for Principle Three, Appropriate Evaluation with the exception of items mentioned under out of compliance.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team noted through file reviews and interviews, the process for obtaining parent input and documenting parent input are not completed consistently by special education staff. The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needing improvement.

Out of compliance**Issues requiring immediate attention****ARSD 24:05:25:04.02 Determination of needed evaluation data**

As a part of an initial or reevaluation, the individual education program team and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data, determine what evaluation data is needed to support eligibility and the child's special education needs. The monitoring team noted evaluations completed and those listed on the prior notice did not concur. Therefore, students were not evaluated in all areas of suspected disability. The district must convene a meeting to determine needed evaluation data for five students. A student is on the child count under the category hearing impaired (515). The student does not meet the eligibility requirements for hearing impaired based on the information available in the student file. Two students are on the child count under the category of other health impaired (555). No behavior evaluation was completed. A student is on the child count under the category speech language (550). According to file review and interview, the child qualifies for speech and language. Through interviews and files reviews, the monitoring team determined the child was not evaluated in the area of written expression. A student is on the child count under the category mental retardation (510). The student was not evaluated in all areas of suspected disability, no adaptive behavior evaluation was completed. The evaluation team needs to reconvene to determine needed evaluation data, evaluate and determine eligibility

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures

The evaluation team must consider a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child including information provided by the parents. Through the review of student records the monitoring team found the district staff gathers data and in some cases complete diagnostic assessment to use as functional information in the evaluation process. Through the review of student records, functional assessment is not consistently summarized and analyzed in the evaluation report. Functional assessment is not consistently used to develop present levels

of performance and annual goals and short term objectives. Therefore, the student's present levels of performance, annual goals and short term objectives did not link to evaluation.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Parental rights document
- Consent and prior notice forms
- State Data Tables

Meets requirements

The steering committee indicated graduation requirements are addressed on each high school IEP at the Bon Homme school district. Parents are given information about state graduation requirements and the course work the student has completed and will need to complete to fulfill those requirements. These are written out and a chart is included as supplemental pages to the IEP document. This information is updated at the annual IEP so each student and parent knows what will be expected to complete the approved program. The school district ensures parents are informed of their parental rights and the Individuals with Disabilities Act. The district makes every attempt to assure parents have been fully informed in their native language or other mode of communication if necessary, all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought.

The steering committee reported the district has available a list of possible surrogates. The district ensures the rights of a child are protected if no parent can be identified.

The steering committee stated the district provides parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and education placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

The steering committee reported the district has policies and procedures in place for responding to complaint actions. The district has had one request for a due process hearing within the past three years. Parties reached an agreement without having to resort to mediation or a hearing.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for Principle 4, Procedural Safeguards.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:29 Confidentiality of Information

ARSD 24:05:29:01 District policies and procedures on confidentiality of information

ARSD 24:05:29:05 Record of Access

ARSD 24:05 29:07 List of types and location of information

Each school district shall develop and implement policies and procedures on confidentiality of information.

Through file reviews and interviews, the monitoring team determined during the past two years the district presents the cumulative file which includes the special education file to the student upon graduation.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Student progress data
- Personnel development information
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training

Meets Requirements:

The steering committee noted the district provides written notice for all IEP meetings and notice contains all required content. The district strives to ensure IEPs written contain all required content. The district has policies and procedures in place to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student.

The steering committee indicated the district ensures transition plans for students are a coordinated set of activities, reflecting student strengths and interests to prepare them for post school activities.

Needs Improvement:

The steering committee stated the district will work on ways to improve parent communication so that parents are comfortable about discussing their concerns about their child's progress and IEP need. Procedures will be fine tuned to provide input for parents from all teachers working with the student.

The steering committee reported the district makes every attempt to conduct IEPs in a timely fashion. In 80% of the files reviewed the IEPs were held within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the evaluation results.

The steering committee report present levels of performance will be linked to functional assessment. We will also tighten up the way related services are reported so all content is included.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee findings for Individual Education Program with the exception of the development of transition plans, present levels of performance, annual goals and short term objectives at the middle school and high school level. The documentation of justification for placement and specific special education and related services to be provided at all levels.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with areas listed as needing improvement. Through the review of student records, the monitoring team reported, timeline issues, lack of documentation of parental input into the evaluation and the development of the IEP

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program shall include a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, including: (a) how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum or (b) for preschool students, as appropriate, how the disability affects the student's participation in appropriate activities; (c) for students with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives; (2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, designed; (a) meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum; and (b) meeting each of the student's educational needs that result from the student's disability.

Present levels of performance must include the student's strengths, needs, skill areas, parent input and the effect of the disability on the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum. In 18 of 33 files reviewed the present levels of performance were missing one or more of the above requirements. Functional assessment must be brought forward into the present levels of performance. Annual goals and short term objectives must link to the present levels of performance. In nine files reviewed, the IEP was not written to confer educational benefit for the student. The monitoring team noted annual goals are based on content standards and therefore are broad, vague, not measurable and do not address the area of eligibility.

Examples:

- The student will organize, interpret and apply information in classroom activities, labs and projects with 80% accuracy 4/5 trials.
- The student will compute 2-3 and 4 step math problems that involve math operations, pre-algebra concepts.
- The student will increase and utilize comprehension strategies.....
- The student will develop and implement strategies to develop more complex sentences using varied vocabulary and basic writing mechanics correctly.

Justification for placement must include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the regular classroom. The monitoring team determined special education staff do not have a clear understanding how to pursue writing justification for placement statements.

Examples:

- The general education setting was rejected because the student's needs could not be met in such a setting. The resource room setting was selected because the student's needs can be met in such a way that will benefit the student and be successful in the classroom.
- The general education setting is rejected as this option would not provide the student with the services needed to improve communication skills. The general classroom with modifications setting is accepted as this setting would provide the student with the modeling, instruction, and

drill necessary for the student to improve communication skills. This setting would allow the student to leave the classroom for practice in a non-distracting environment while completing all of work (academic) with classmates.

ARSD 24:0527:01.03(1) Content of individualized education program IEP and
ARSD 24:0527:13.02 Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the students movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The monitoring team determined through file reviews and staff interviews, the IEP's for student's age 16 and older did not include a coordinated set of activities which address individual student needs. The monitoring team noted a transition planning inventory is used for evaluation purposes, however, the information is not summarized and used as functional information in developing the present levels of performance, transition services, annual goals and objectives. In 18 files of students age 16 and older, transition planning did not include an outcome oriented process which would lead to students moving out of school into appropriate post-secondary settings.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment
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After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Parent, Student, General educator surveys
- General curriculum information

Needs improvement

The steering committee reported the district needs provide opportunities for additional professional development to assist teachers in the implementation of IEPs. The district also needs to explore ways to provide time enough time during the school week to complete necessary tasks (i.e. meetings, modifying curriculum, consulting etc.)

Validation Results

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee, opportunities for staff development need to be a priority.